and also provides Central financial assistance to State/UT Governments for construction of tourist accommodation based on the *inter-se* priority and availability of funds.

Erosion of Ganga and Padma in West Bengal

3951. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had set up an Export Group to study the erosion of the Ganga and Padma in Murshidabad and Nadia Districts of West Bengal;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the recommendations of the Export Group and the details thereof;

(c) the status of implementation in so far as the Union Government are concerned of these recommendations and the details thereof; and

(d) the reasons for non-implementation, if any?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) An Expert Committee was constituted in September, 1996 by Planning Commission to examine the bank erosion, problem of the river Ganga/Padma in West Bengal which submitted its report in December, 1996 recommending short term and long term measures, costing Rs. 315 crore and Rs. 612 crore respectively for tackling the erosion problem in various reaches lying upstream and downstream of the Farakka Barrage in the affected districts in West Bengal. The long and short term measures are prioritised and the schemes were allocated between the Centre and the Government of West Bengal based on their respective jurisdiction. The recommendations made by the Ganga River Erosion Committee (West Bengal) set up in 1978 and headed by Pritam Singh have been taken into consideration by the Expert Committee in their suggestions for remedial measures.

(c) and (d) A scheme of this Ministry for providing Central Assistance to Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal for anti-erosion measures along Ganga has been given "in principle" approval by the Planning Commission. This scheme includes critical anti-erosion works related to the recommendations of the Expert Committee.